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CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY, ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, IMPUNITY

Letter dated 11 April 2002 from the head of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights addressed to the Chairperson of the Commission

In response to the report of Mr. Cumaraswamy, the Special Rapporteur on independence of judges and lawyers, I referred to a statement which I had given him.

I enclose a copy of that statement* and I should be most grateful if it could be part of the report of the meeting and be distributed as a document of the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed) Andrey GLOVER
Head of delegation

* Reproduced as received in the language of submission, in English only.

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ANNEX

The Government of the United Kingdom thanks the Special Rapporteur for his continued interest in Northern Ireland.

The Government welcomes the very positive comments made by the Special Rapporteur in his report regarding the significant improvements in police practices in Northern Ireland. The closure of the final holding centre and the introduction of video and audio recording of police interviews, for example, demonstrates the Government's commitment to ongoing improvements in the area of human rights.

The Government notes the concern of the Special Rapporteur regarding the deaths of Patrick Finucane and Rosemary Nelson.

The Government unreservedly condemns the brutal murders and recognises that they have been a source of concern.

The Government is determined that the truth should emerge concerning the terrible murders and associated allegations of collusion with the security forces in Northern Ireland. Priority must be to bring to justice those responsible for the murders. The Government remains committed to the package agreed at Weston Park to appoint, in conjunction with the Irish Government, an independent international judge to investigate certain cases of concern including those of Finucane and Nelson.

As stated in para 19 of the Weston Park proposals, detailed terms of reference will be published but the appointed judge will be asked to review all the papers, interview anyone who can help, establish and report with recommendations for any further action. The methodology is for the judge himself to determine.

We also stand by the commitment that should the judge recommend public inquiries into any of the cases the relevant Government will implement that recommendation.

The Government is currently working with the Irish Government to identify a suitable candidate for appointment.

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